



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Washington Veterans Home • 1141 Beach Drive E • Port Orchard, Washington 98366 • (360) 895-4700

April 22, 2020

Good day to you all,

I have purposely delayed my weekly correspondence to you for the following reason. Beginning last Friday and continuing through Monday, we tested every resident at the Washington Veterans Home for the COVID-19 virus. This mass testing was accomplished through a coordinated effort with the VA Puget Sound Health Care System who generously donated the sampling kits and ran the tests for us. I am pleased to announce that all residents agreed to testing and all were NEGATIVE for the virus. I need to emphasize however that we are dealing with an extremely sneaky enemy and will continue to fight back on every front. This includes retesting of residents for COVID-19 on a case by case basis if symptoms arise, and treatment when indicated. The Washington Veterans Home is in a much stronger position to minimize the potential for infection with each passing day as more PPE, equipment and constant upgrades to our procedures unfold. We now know much more about the virus than when the pandemic first started.

While there are beginning to be some brighter spots on the horizon, I need to emphasize that all current measures to safeguard our residents and the heroic staff that care for them are still in effect. These measures include:

- If you are family member, friend or non-essential personnel, PLEASE DO NOT VISIT THE CAMPUS. We will contact you and arrange for a safe visit if we feel you are needed by your family member for compassionate reasons.
- Primary and secondary screening procedures for all staff and other essential personnel entering the building continues.
- All employees and essential personnel are required to wear masks at all times while at work in order to reduce the spread of infection.
- All new residents received from the hospital are required to have evidence of a negative COVID test before admission.
- Residents admitted to the facility from a non-hospital or other healthcare setting are thoroughly screened prior to admission. They are COVID-tested on arrival and are cared for under droplet precautions in their room until negative test results are received.
- Current residents displaying signs or symptoms or fever, respiratory distress or other COVID-19 indicators remain in their room and are cared for under droplet precautions until negative test results are received.

- We have set aside a special unit of 6 beds, designated to accommodate residents in the event of a COVID-19 infection. The unit has protective barriers, PPE, equipment and trained staff at the ready in the event that the need arises.

On a lighter note, we were able to have an impromptu barbecue lunch last Thursday allowing a number of residents to eat their lunch outside and take advantage of the warm day. All residents were spaced at appropriate distances and sun screen was applied. The change of pace was a good break for our residents and staff who continue to work tirelessly to keep everyone healthy. Staff and residents continue to display amazing fortitude and resilience during this time.

Website with messages like this as well as updates on COVID-19 tests performed and their outcomes. www.dva.wa.gov/covid.

I wish all of you safe health in these uncertain times.

Sincerely,



George Wiemerslage, Administrator
Washington Veterans Home
Department of Veterans Affairs